



Sixteen Days: Taking Action to End Violence against Women

Resources for Church Action (prepared by [CCOW](#), November 2014)

Between the **25th of November**, which is the UN International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and the **10th of December**, which is Human Rights Day, churches around the world are joining other groups in “Sixteen Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence.” While gender-based violence can affect both men and women, the focus of the sixteen days is on ending violence directed at women, so the sixteen days are also often known by titles such as “Sixteen Days of Activism against Violence against Women.”

Why take action?

Violence against women and girls is a reality in all societies – and in our churches. We need to break the silence that surrounds this reality, challenge attitudes that help to perpetuate it, and work as women and men of faith to prevent and end violence against women and girls and all gender-based violence.

Christian theology teaches us that God is a God of love and justice, and that all are made in the image of God and called to right relationships. Violence against women and girls is contrary to this teaching. Unfortunately many churches ignore the issues or sometimes even are complicit in attitudes that can enable abuse.

What are churches doing to mark the 16 Days? And how can we get involved?

- The Anglican Communion Office’s Director for Women in Church and Society, the Revd Terrie Robinson, has produced a superb [collection of resources on the 16 Days](#). Use it to inspire action in your church, not just for the 16 Days but year round.
- Ending violence against women and girls isn’t “a women’s thing”: it’s for women and men together, and numerous campaigns exist to help men get involved. On the 25th of November, “[White Ribbon Day](#),” men are invited to wear white ribbons as a sign of their commitment not to commit, condone, or remain silent about men’s violence against women. If you want to celebrate this in a service, there’s an Australian [White Ribbon Liturgy](#). There’s also a distinctly Christian version of the White Ribbon campaign, Restored’s [First Man Standing](#). Could your church encourage men to join in one of these? You might want to watch this new [video of Anglican men](#) speaking out on violence against women, too!
- The Mothers’ Union has prepared a [16 Days Activism Pack](#) which includes a multitude of useful materials: theological information, prayers and reflections, 16 prayer points, a service outline and guide to holding a vigil, press releases, tweets, guidance on writing to politicians, and more.
- Need more materials for a service? Take a look at materials collected by CABSA [here](#) and [here](#). The Methodist Church has two services online, [one](#) from Chile and [one](#) from the UK. The mission agency US has [good intercessions](#) as part of their “Hitting Home” campaign. Want materials for private prayer? Look at Tearfund’s [prayer resource](#) with 16 days of stories and prayer points and [daily prayer points](#) in the Catholic tradition from the Philippines. The Catholic Bishops (USA) also [suggest a way of using Psalm 55](#).
- [Restored](#) is preparing a 16 Days activity pack, which will be on their website. Might your church also use the Restored [Church Pack](#) to find out more about domestic violence and how you can help prevent it?
- The World Council of Churches is reviving “[Thursdays in Black](#),” a campaign where women and men are encouraged to wear black as a peaceful protest against rape and violence. Churches will hold services where clergy wear black, and congregations will dress in black or be given black ribbons or [badges](#). Look for prayers in resources above; you might also take the [Thursdays in Black](#) or [We Will Speak Out](#) pledge.